

## The War of 1812 (A Brief Description)

In the War of 1812, the United States took on the greatest naval power in the world, Great Britain, in a conflict that would have an huge effect on the young country's future. The United States suffered many costly defeats at the hands of British, Canadian and Native American troops during the war, including the capture and burning of the nation's capital, Washington, D.C., in August 1814.

The war was fought in three regions:

- (1) at sea, warships and [privateers](#) of both sides attacked each other's merchant ships; the British [blockaded](#) the Atlantic coast of the U.S. and made large-scale raids in the later stages of the war;
- (2) both land and naval battles were fought on the U.S.–Canadian frontier, which ran along the [Great Lakes](#) and [Saint Lawrence River](#); and
- (3) the American South and [Gulf Coast](#) saw major land battles in which the American forces defeated Britain's Indian allies and resisted the main British invasion forces.

In the United States, battles such as the [Battle of New Orleans](#) of 1815 and the [Battle of Baltimore](#) of 1814 (which inspired the lyrics of the United States national anthem, "[The Star-Spangled Banner](#)") produced a sense excitement and pride. The Treaty of Ghent on February 17, 1815, ended the war but left many of the most difficult questions still unresolved. However, many in the United States celebrated the War of 1812 as a "second war of independence," beginning an era of political agreement and national patriotism.

In Canada and the United States, numerous ceremonies were scheduled in 2012 to commemorate the war. The war is scarcely remembered in Britain and France today, as it regarded the conflict as a sideshow to the much larger war between these two nations occurring at the same time.

### QUESTIONS

1. What two primary nations fought in the War of 1812? What other nations were involved or impacted by this war?
2. Identify the ways in which the United States was affected by the War of 1812?
3. Compare the description of the War of 1812 to President Washington's Farewell Address. How would you explain the United States involvement in this war only 16 years after President Washington's warnings about foreign relations?